

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWCOMER POPULATION  
OF GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA  
IN JUNE 1968

Prepared by

D. Gordon Bennett, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Geography  
University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro

Published by

Research Division  
Greensboro Chamber of Commerce  
Greensboro, North Carolina

HB  
2197  
G74G7

August 29, 1968

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWCOMER POPULATION OF  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA IN JUNE, 1968

Prepared by

D. Gordon Bennett, Ph. D.  
Assistant Professor of Geography  
University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro

Published by

Research Division  
Greensboro Chamber of Commerce  
Greensboro, North Carolina

August 29, 1968

UNCG LIBRARY

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is very appreciative of the careful assistance given in interviewing and tabulating data by the students in Geography 521 at UNC-G. In addition, many thanks are hereby expressed to Mrs. Linda Brown of the Research Division of the Chamber of Commerce for volunteering several of her evenings to record data obtained by mailed returns of the questionnaires.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEWCOMER POPULATION OF  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA IN JUNE, 1968

The tremendous mobility of the population of the United States has become such an integral part of American society that nearly everyone has become aware to some extent of the continued spatial redistribution of the inhabitants of this nation. The impact of the massive movement of people into, out of, and within cities has increased by impressive proportions during the last two decades.

Whereas the decennial census of the United States once was considered rather adequate for planning for the needs of most communities throughout a ten-year period, the surge of the tide of migrants in this country greatly diminishes the reliability of this document a few years after its release. Even though mid-decade population checks are made by the Census Bureau, these provide only cursory information of somewhat questionable reliability. Thus, while the ebb and flow of the human tide continues to significantly alter the population structure of our cities, community planning too often must rely upon out-of-date data combined with generalized current estimates of the present.

More than 2,000 families and unrelated individuals adopt Greensboro as their new residence every year, while over 1,500 others leave this community. In addition, many persons move from one section of the city to another. Thus, a substantial change in the type and distribution of the residents of Greensboro occurs annually.



But what kinds of differences are there in the characteristics and needs of the citizens of this community during subsequent years and in the various sections of town? Certainly, all the inhabitants of the city would benefit greatly if public officials were cognizant of the changing requirements of their constituency.

### The Problem

In order to provide some insight into the changes taking place in Greensboro, a pilot study was conducted of newcomers to the city from other places.

Answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What were the states of birth of the household head and the spouse?
2. What was the previous residence of the newcomer before moving to Greensboro?
3. What is the spatial dispersion of newcomers in Greensboro?
4. What proportion of the newcomers is renting?
5. What proportion of the newcomers sought to rent?
6. Why did the newcomer choose a particular dwelling?
7. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the newcomer family?

### The Procedure

Although this study attempts to provide current data about newcomers to Greensboro, certain difficulties and deficiencies were unavoidable--but not overlooked--in preparing this pilot project. Time, staff, and finances

were too meager to allow a thorough investigation of all movers and migrants in Greensboro, or even of all newcomers. With certain limitations in mind, therefore, an effort was made to determine various characteristics of much of the newcomer group and to demonstrate the necessity for a full-scale project of identifying and analyzing the population structure of those who move into, out of, and within the city.

Because the study had to be carried out during only a three-week period, the number of possible interviews which could be taken was very restricted. Thus, a list of newcomers supplied by Duke Power Company during the month of June was selected as the study group. Even though 229 households appeared on the list, these did not include those moving into apartments or other dwellings which had electricity furnished, or those coming to live with relatives in their homes. Thus, many families and individuals were omitted from the survey, especially single men and women, young couples, and elderly persons. Nevertheless, the group does include most newcomers for the month of June.

The Chamber of Commerce Research Division mailed a letter and questionnaire to each of the 229 newcomer households for June, 1968 (Figure 1). During the three-week period, eighty-one completed questionnaires, or thirty-five per cent, were returned to the Chamber in a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Twenty-two others were returned by the Post Office because of incorrect addresses. Of the remaining 126 households, twelve teams of two members each successfully interviewed seventy-six more newcomers. Thus, of the 229 in-migrants for June, 157, or 68.5 per cent, supplied information for this study.

GREENSBORO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

POST OFFICE BOX 3246

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA 27402

TO THE NEWCOMER

RE: Newcomer Questionnaire

The Greensboro Chamber of Commerce is interested in learning more about the newcomers to our community so that business and civic leaders can better plan for the continuously growing and changing population of the city.

The Chamber of Commerce would greatly appreciate your answering all appropriate questions on the back of this letter and returning it in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

All information will be tabulated on data sheets and the questionnaires then destroyed. Only those persons working on this study will see the questionnaires.

Only with the help of persons, such as you, can we plan better for the needs of you and the total community.

If the Chamber of Commerce can serve you in anyway, please call us at 273-8687.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Pickard, Manager  
Research Division

Census Tract Code: \_\_\_\_\_

-4B-

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NEWCOMER QUESTIONNAIRE

On what date did you move to Greensboro? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your previous city of residence? \_\_\_\_\_ Length of stay? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your next previous city of residence? \_\_\_\_\_ Length of stay? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you leave your previous residence? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose Greensboro over other cities? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you seek a dwelling to rent or buy? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you now renting or buying? \_\_\_\_\_

What were your two major ways of seeking a dwelling? (number in 1, 2 order):

Real estate agent    Newspaper ads    Walked or rode around    Hints from friends

How many places did you look at? (circle):    one    2-5    6-15    over 15

Why did you choose your present dwelling over others considered? (number 1, 2, 3):

Cost

Transportation or Distance to Work

Outside Appearance

Distance to Shopping Area

Number of Rooms

Open Space Around Residence

School District

Neighborhood Reputation

Nearness to Friends

Kind of People in Neighborhood

Nearness to Relative

Restricted to Live in this General Area of City

Parking Available

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan to move within the next year? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your two major reasons for planning to move? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the city and state of birth of the head of the household? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the city and state of birth of the spouse? \_\_\_\_\_

	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Years Education Completed</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Employer</u>
Head Household	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spouse	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please circle the following annual income group into which your family falls:

Less than \$3,000

\$ 6,001-\$10,000

\$15,001-\$20,000

\$3,001-\$6,000

\$10,001-\$15,000

\$20,001 and over



At least two important problems are inherent in mailing, however. The first is that of those returning questionnaires from a 100 per cent mailing, a selectivity of the sample is introduced into the data as a result of perhaps certain types of persons feeling more responsibility toward replying to the request. The second problem relates to the absence of a trained interviewer who could explain questions which the respondent might have and obtain sufficiently detailed information about certain topics when needed. In spite of this, however, mailing enabled a higher proportion of return at less expense than would have a strict random sampled population.

In addition to the problems associated with the means of obtaining names of newcomers and of methods in sampling the population, the person interviewed in the home presented difficulties. Since nearly all the interviews were conducted during the day, the spouse usually supplied the information. Occasionally, she could not or would not answer questions dealing with income, reason for choosing the present dwelling, and so on. This situation could be partially rectified by interviewing during the evening. However, this is not regarded as a critical problem.

After the interviews were conducted, the data were tabulated and statistical measurements were derived for desired information. Afterwards, an analysis was made of the findings.

#### State of Birth

The fantastic mobility of persons in the United States is definitely characterized in this study. Of the 157 households for which data were

collected, newcomers came from nearly thirty-five other states and from five foreign countries. These newcomers accounted for approximately sixty per cent of the household heads and slightly over fifty per cent of the spouses (Figures 2 and 3). Furthermore, for only sixteen per cent of married couples in the study group were both the husband and wife born in the same city, and for only about 50% of the couples were both partners born in the same state. Thus, only slightly over a two-thirds return of the newcomer list shows a tremendous geographical cross-section of the nation being represented among persons moving into Greensboro. The three native states most often represented among newcomers--excluding North Carolina--were Virginia, New York, and South Carolina for household heads and Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina for spouses. However, these states accounted for only twenty per cent and fourteen per cent of the totals, respectively.

#### Migration and Spatial Dispersion

Migrants came to Greensboro directly from twenty-nine other states, plus the District of Columbia, Canada, and the Marshall Islands. Approximately thirty per cent of the inter-state in-migrants moved from contiguous states. Slightly over one-half were from the Southeastern states--south of Pennsylvania and east of Texas (Figure 4). Nevertheless, approximately seventy-five per cent of the newcomers moved to the city from more than 150 miles away and twenty per cent from west of the Mississippi River. Greensboro, therefore, has a strong attraction across the nation as a community in which to live and work.



Figure 2



STATES OF BIRTH OF GREENSBORO'S NEWCOMERS  
(HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS)  
DURING JUNE 1968

UNITED STATES

F101

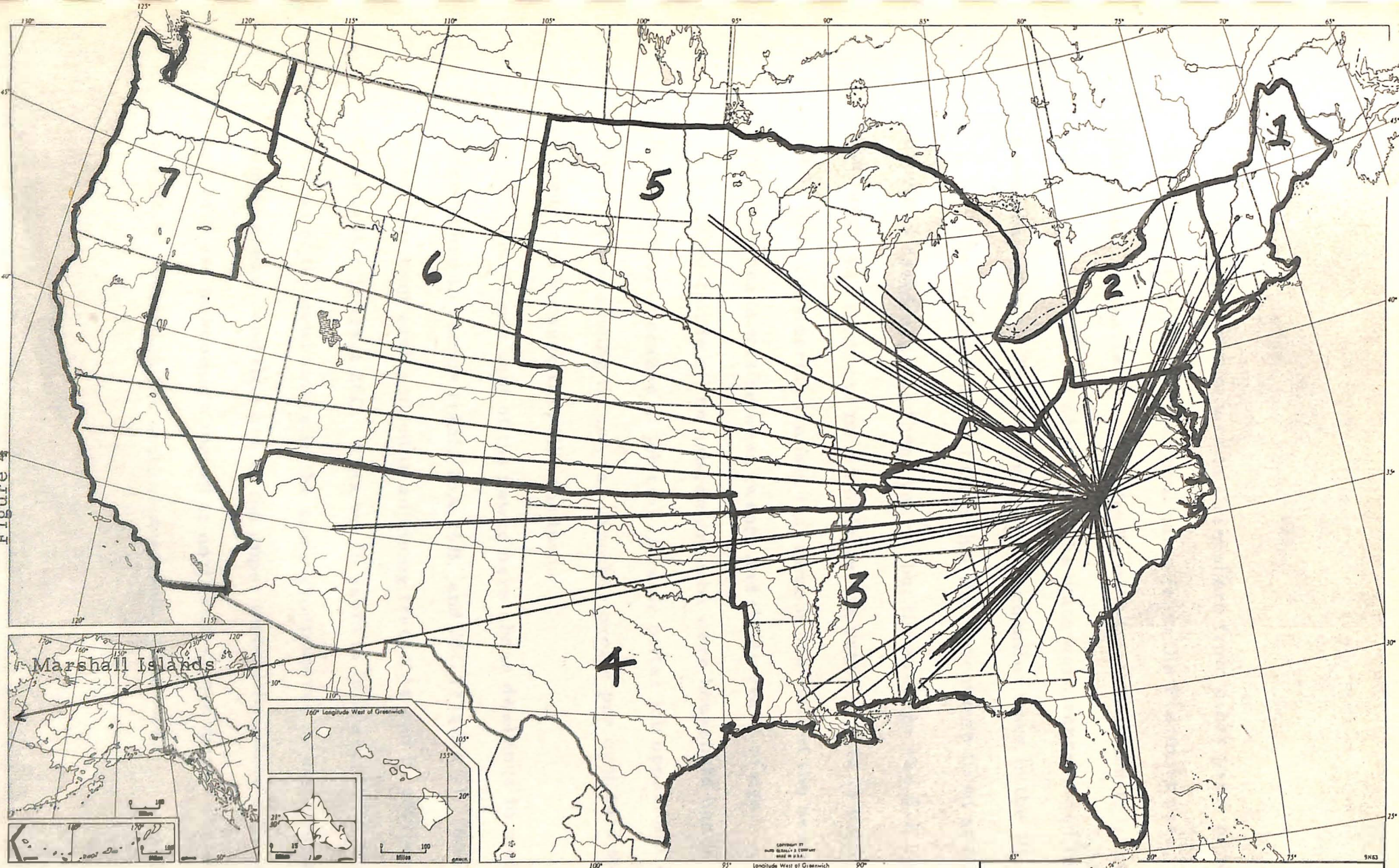


RAND McNALLY & COMPANY

0 300  
Miles



Figure 4



# PREVIOUS RESIDENCE - OUT OF STATE

## Legend

- |                          |                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 New England States     | 5 Midwestern States                 |
| 2 Middle Atlantic States | 6 Rocky Mountain-Great Basin States |
| 3 Southern States        | 7 Pacific Coast States              |
| 4 Southwestern States    |                                     |

UNITED STATES

F101



RAND McNALLY & COMPANY

0 300 Miles



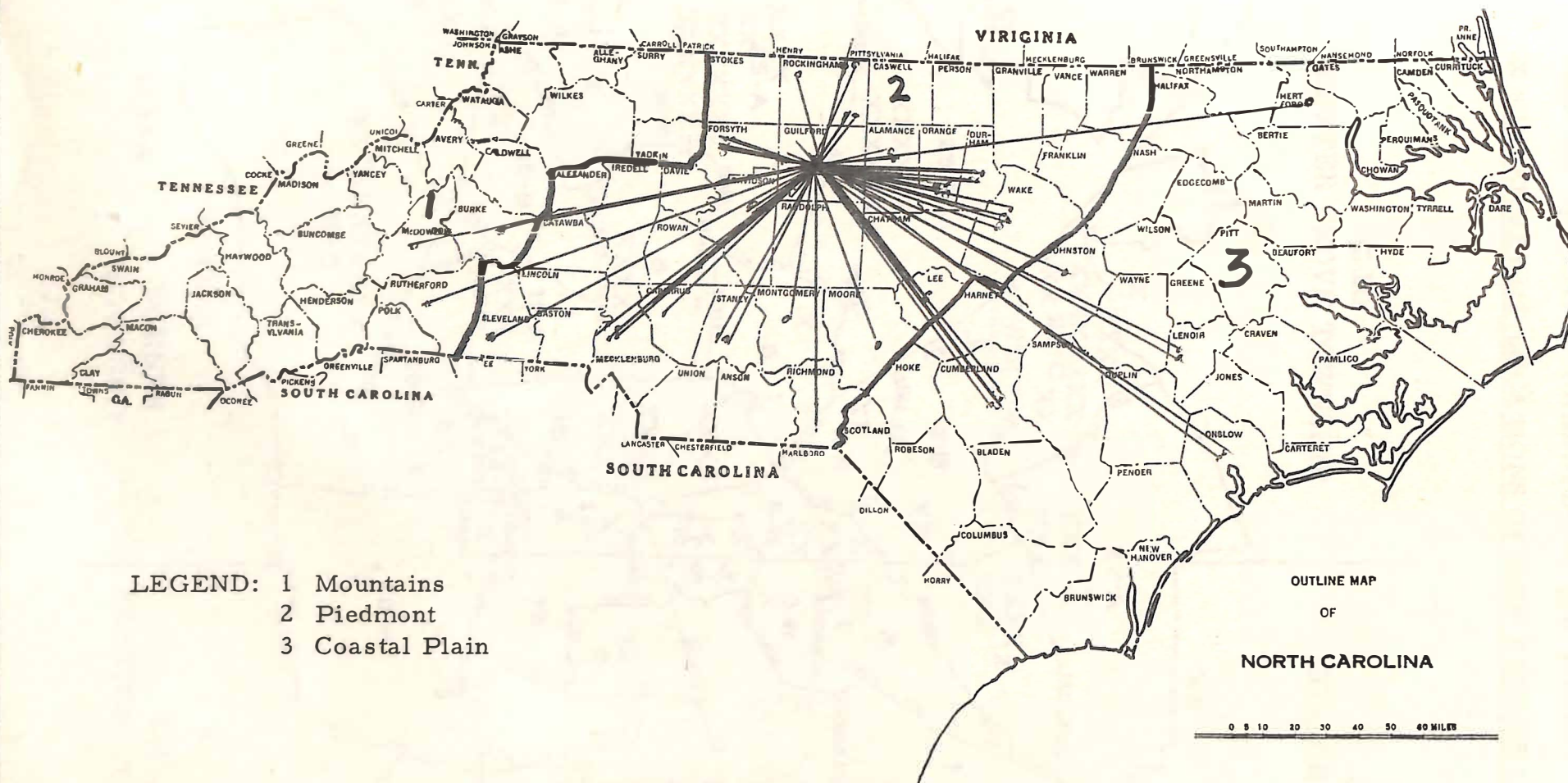
Of those newcomers to Greensboro from other parts of North Carolina, nearly eighty per cent came from the Piedmont area, with particular emphasis on the Piedmont Industrial Crescent (Figure 5). Thirty-eight of the 100 counties in the state were represented in the newcomer group. Twenty-five of these counties were in the Piedmont.

The median length of time that the newcomers lived at their previous residence was three years, but the average was 5.8 years and the range was from one month to forty-six years. This is not a very short time considering the fact that almost one-half of the newcomer household heads was between twenty and thirty years of age.

Two-thirds of the newcomers who were household heads moved to Greensboro because of job transfers or better job opportunities--two-thirds of these being transfers. Another twelve per cent said they chose Greensboro because they like the town.

Thirty per cent of the newcomers chose dwellings in northwest Greensboro in census tracts 25A, 25B, and 25C (Figure 6). Another seven per cent each settled in adjoining tract C24 and in southwest Greensboro in tract 26C. This would seem to indicate that a large proportion of the newcomers in the study group moved to high-income residential areas and thus are in the upper income brackets. Nearly one-half of these newcomers moved to northwest Greensboro, while over one-third resided in the southwest section of the city.

PREVIOUS RESIDENCE - IN STATE





## CENSUS TRACTS IN GREENSBORO and VICINITY

X = INTENSITY OF LOCATIONS OF NEW RESIDENTS

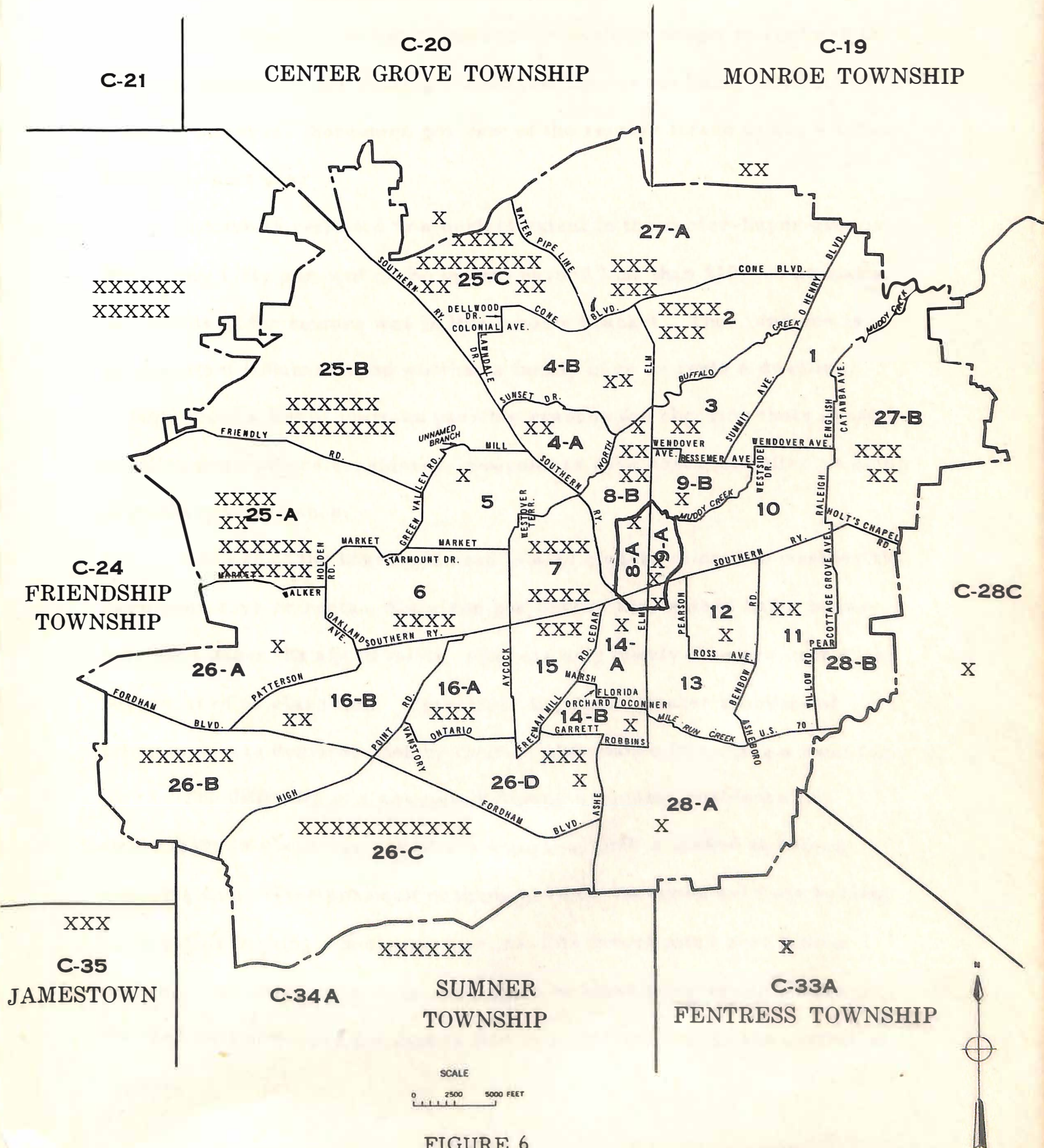


FIGURE 6

### Residential Characteristics

Two-thirds of the newcomers to Greensboro sought to rent and the same proportion is now renting--these two figures not being mutually inclusive, however. Seventeen per cent of the renters intend to buy a home within the next year.

Income is reflected to a certain extent in the renter-buyer groups. While only forty per cent of the buyers earned less than \$10,000 annually, two-thirds of the renters was in this income bracket. Thus, income is an important influence upon whether a family buys or rents a dwelling. In fact, from a list of fourteen possible reasons for choosing their present dwelling over others considered, newcomers gave cost most often as being of primary importance.

The age of the household head is also closely related to whether the newcomer buys or rents. Sixty-two per cent of the renters had a household head under the age of thirty, whereas only twenty-five per cent of the buyers were so classified. Therefore, the much greater mobility of young people is demonstrated by their predominance in renting a dwelling.

The difficulty of a newcomer finding a suitable residence in Greensboro is characterized by the numerous places looked at before choosing one. Nearly one-half of these persons examined over six housing units before making a decision, and one-fifth investigated over fifteen places. Numerous comments were made by those interviewed concerning the high cost of houses for sale in this city, particularly in the northwest section.



In attempting to locate a place to live, thirty-six per cent of the newcomers used newspaper ads most frequently, while twenty-eight per cent contacted real estate agents most often. The second major ways of seeking a dwelling were real estate agents with thirty-one per cent and newspaper ads with twenty-nine per cent.

### Family Structure

Females represent nine per cent of the household heads in the newcomer group, and single males account for another six per cent. Thus, eighty-five per cent of the newcomer group consists of families having both a husband and a wife. However, married couples represented only seventy-five per cent of the total households in 1960.

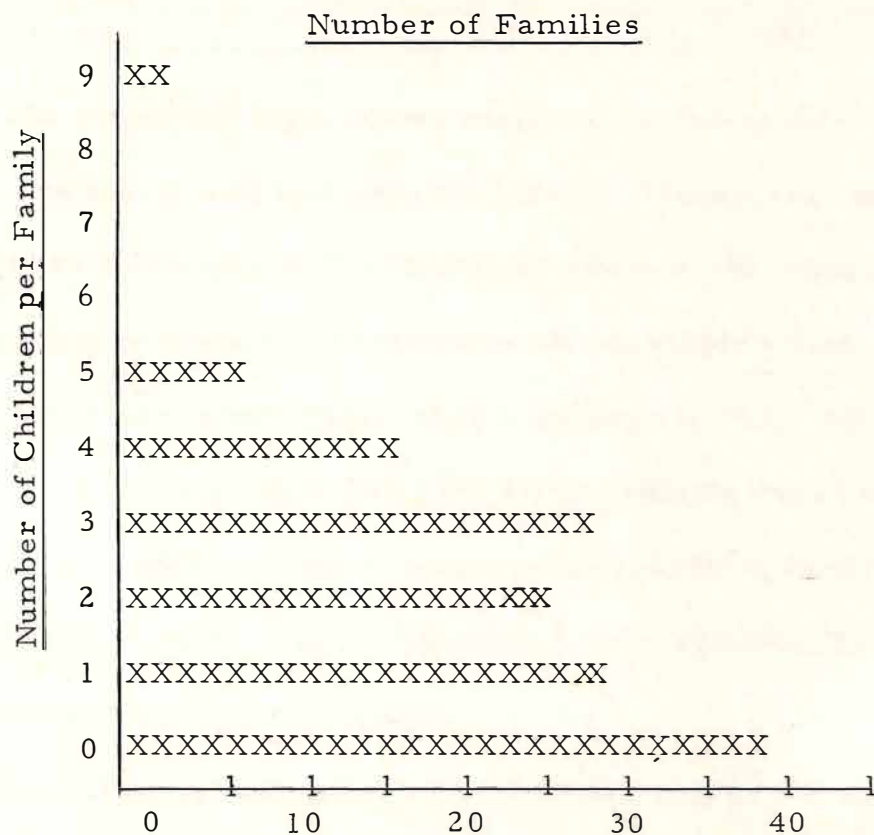
The average age of the household head in the study group is thirty-two. It is thirty for the female heads and thirty-two for the married male heads, but only twenty-three for the single male heads. The median ages for these divisions are significantly higher, however, being approximately forty, forty-one, thirty-nine, and twenty-five, respectively. The age occurring most often is twenty-three (nine per cent of the cases) in all instances, except for single male heads when it is twenty-one. The average age of spouses is thirty-one, and the median is thirty-eight. The mean and median ages of the children are eight and thirteen years, in that order.

The average size per newcomer household is 3.4, which is the same as the 1960 figure. The percentage of married couples with children under eighteen is sixty-one per cent, which is near the figure

of sixty-two per cent for 1960. The average number of children per family is 1.8. (See Figure 7 for a frequency graph of number of children per family. )

Figure 7

Number of Children Per Family By Number of Families



One of the greatest differences between the characteristics of the newcomers and the Greensboro residents of 1960 is income. Whereas fifty-two per cent of the families had a 1960 income of under \$6,000, only nineteen per cent of the newcomers is in this class (Figure 8). Moreover, sixteen per cent of the latter has an annual income exceeding \$15,000, while only six per cent of the families in Greensboro in 1960 earned this much.

Figure 8  
Annual Family Income

Income	Newcomers		1960	
	Number	%	Number	%
\$ 0 - 3,000	5	3%	5581	19%
\$ 3,000 - 6,000	24	16%	9623	33%
\$ 6,000-10,000	57	38%	9546	32%
\$10,000-15,000	40	27%	2912	10%
\$15,000 & over	24	16%	1686	6%

The extremely high income status of the newcomers is reflected in their educational and occupational levels. The average number of school years completed by the household heads in the study group is 14.8. The median school years completed by all household heads, spouses, and other persons twenty years of age and over is 14.5, which is much higher than the 11.7 years recorded in 1960 for persons twenty-five years of age and over. The median school education for household heads among newcomers is substantially higher than that for the spouses, being 16.9 for the former and 13.7 for the latter.

Only slightly less than twenty-five per cent of the spouses are employed in contrast to nearly forty-five per cent of them in 1960. Although the newcomer spouses had a better education than those in the 1960 census, the much smaller proportion of working spouses in the study group certainly offsets significantly any contribution to the average family income. Thus, most of the increase in income results from the improved earning power of the husband which is reflected in higher educational levels and better-paying job.

of our residents during the last eight years, and to demonstrate the imperative necessity of providing current population information for public officials, businessmen, and prospective industrialists.

A city, such as Greensboro, which continues to experience steady growth and a high degree of mobility, has a vital need for data concerning its residents. In order for manufacturing and commercial enterprises, schools, and other public service organs of city government to be aware of the potential employees and consumers and the requirements of all its citizens, population studies are indispensable in supplying data and analyses of the geographical distribution and movements of people and of the detailed socio-economic characteristics of the inhabitants of Greensboro.

On a large-scale project using trained, paid interviewers, a small sample could be taken for obtaining detailed information, while a 100 per cent mailing could be used for gathering general data for the total group. In this way unanswered cards could be checked on by telephone or reminder cards.

In addition to the names obtained from Duke Power Company, the Chamber could attempt to get the names and addresses of movers who reside in apartments, mobile homes, parsonages, and other dwellings that have no individual electrical cut-ons or cut-offs. This information could be supplied by owners or managers of these housing units. Therefore, they could also be included in the sample.



The author estimates that between 4,000 or 5,000 household moves are made annually. Reliable detailed data concerning population changes could be made by using a five per cent sample, thereby conducting between 200 and 250 interviews. Probably thirty to fifty per cent returns on general characteristics could be obtained by a 100 per cent mailing with follow ups. Thus, public officials and others would have at their disposal at all times a current record of the number and structure of households entering, leaving, and moving within Greensboro. The availability of this type of information would give Greensboro the data necessary to plan wisely for the present and the future and to attract businesses which are looking for new locations. Although every system of population enumeration has certain limitations, this one would provide essential information of a highly reliable degree for the needs which must be met during the interceding years between the decennial censuses.

Only by being well informed concerning the continual changes in the spatial distribution and characteristics of the population of Greensboro can the leaders realize the directions in which they must move to plan a better future for their businesses, public services, and fellow citizens.

